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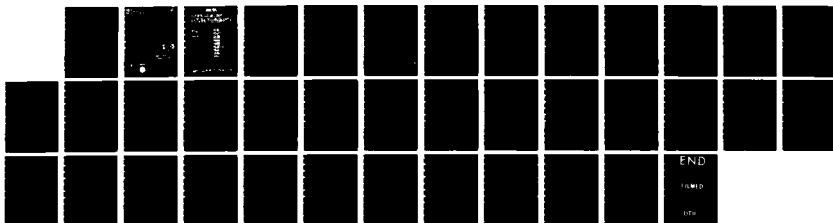
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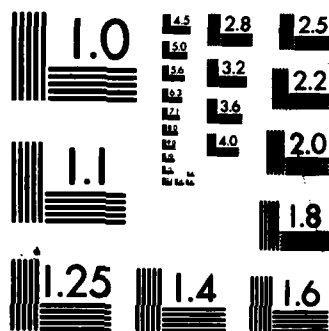
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# US-SOVIET INTERACTIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD

Francis Fukuyama\*

## I. INTRODUCTION

While a great deal of attention has been focused recently on the question of nuclear war and arms control as the centerpiece of US-Soviet relations, the Third World is the only arena of the competition where the US has actually engaged in major military conflicts since 1945, and in which Americans, Russians, their friends and allies have died in large numbers. Developments in the Third World -- particularly Korea and Vietnam -- virtually defined the Cold War in its first two decades, while Soviet and Cuban activities there bore major responsibility for undermining the detente of the 1970s. The Third World remains the most likely venue for future US-Soviet confrontation, and in the Persian Gulf there is an all too real potential for a Third World crisis sparking nuclear confrontation between the superpowers and returning us full circle back to the nuclear question.

^This chapter will begin by outlining the general structure of US-Soviet conflict in the Third World in the first three postwar decades, analyze the several important changes that occurred during the mid-to-late 70s, and conclude with an elaboration of the implications of these changes for the balance of the decade and beyond. While future US-Soviet interaction in the Third World will look similar to what has occurred in the past, with the Soviet Union and its allies seeking to change a status quo backed by the United States, the present paper will argue that the United States and the Soviet Union are in the process of reversing roles in the Third World in certain key respects, and that consequently superpower interactions there are likely to appear quite different from what we have come to expect in the past.←

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\*Dr. Fukuyama is a senior analyst at The Rand Corporation specializing in Soviet Third World Affairs. This paper is a revised version of a paper prepared for a conference on "U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Next Phase," sponsored by the Rand/UCLA Center for the Study of Soviet International Behavior, October 18-19, 1984, Los Angeles and Santa Monica, California.



## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTWAR US-SOVIET INTERACTIONS

US-Soviet conflict in the Third World in the roughly three decades since the end of World War II has manifested a fairly consistent pattern whereby the United States has sought to maintain the status quo, while the Soviet Union, its clients and associated national liberation movements have sought to challenge it. Like all generalizations this one is subject to numerous qualifications and exceptions, but it accurately characterizes both major wars in this period (Korea and Vietnam), as well as a host of smaller conflicts and crises including those over Iran in 1947, Suez in 1956, Lebanon-Iraq in 1958, the Cuban revolution, Laos in 1960, Algeria through the early 60s, Angola in 1975, the Horn of Africa in 1977-78, Afghanistan in 1978, and Nicaragua in 1979. It should not be surprising for the Soviet Union to be generally supportive of challenges to the status quo, since the Soviet state was founded on the basis of a certain dynamic concept of history and much of the Third World itself began this period either as a colonial dependency or as a newly-independent state struggling to cut its ties with former colonizers. When the USSR made its first major venture into the Third World with the Egyptian-Czech arms deal of 1955, Moscow had virtually no friends or clients in the Third World; indeed, it had almost no physical access to the outside world as a result of the interlocking system of defensive pacts erected by the United States around its periphery. Under these circumstances, change of almost any sort could only be of benefit to Soviet interests, and was consequently likely to be viewed with suspicion by the United States.

The chief issues for Soviet foreign policy in the Third World concerned how best to bring about revolutionary changes in the status quo in ways that were both effective and did not unduly damage the interests of the USSR as a state. These included questions such as the readiness of a country for national liberation or revolutionary change given its social-economic level of development, the role of armed struggle versus more traditional forms of political activity, collaboration with non-Communists in broad popular front organizations, the role of peasants and bourgeois intellectuals in working class organizations, etc. The Soviets brought to these questions a very rich

background of theory and practical experience. The debates which they carried on with the Chinese in the 1950s and 60s over questions like guerilla war or with the Cubans over the *foco* theory echoed discussions that had occurred much earlier within the Bolshevik movement before the revolution or in the Comintern in subsequent years.

Ultimately many of these questions boiled down to tactical issues regarding the appropriate pace and risks to be undertaken in promoting revolutionary change. The Soviet Union, as an established state and a nuclear-armed superpower, generally tended to worry more about premature bids for power that might at a minimum lead to the destruction of the movement in question, and at a maximum provoke Western intervention with the possibility of military confrontation and ultimately nuclear war. Soviet policy, drawing on its highly-developed doctrinal background, demonstrated considerable flexibility in identifying and exploiting opportunities for support of sympathetic movements on the one hand, and scaling back that support and urging caution when circumstances did not look right on the other. Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev spoke of the need for peaceful coexistence and began moving towards regulation of relations with the US that culminated in the detente of the early 70s. While Soviet spokesmen began talking about the need for mutual superpower restraint in local conflicts when addressing Western audiences, to their own ideological sympathizers they emphasized that detente between the superpowers on a state-to-state level did not mean an end to the struggle for national liberation or social change. And indeed, actual Soviet behavior in the Third World became if anything more activist after detente.<sup>1</sup>

US policy in this same period complemented Soviet policy and was primarily concerned with how to deter or defend against Soviet threats to the status quo. As a result of American experiences in Europe and Korea, the threat was originally conceived of in the 1950s as primarily a conventional military one. The US response was to try to extend the protection of its margin of nuclear superiority to the Third World through the doctrine of massive retaliation and the signing of formal mutual defense treaties modeled on the NATO alliance to countries in the

<sup>1</sup> See Leonard Schapiro, "The International Department of the CPSU," *International Journal*, Winter 1976-77, pp. 49 ff.



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Middle East and Southeast Asia. As it became clear that such a strategy was not effective in deterring the predominant threats that emerged in the Third World (i.e., internal instability and guerilla warfare), US emphasis shifted more towards counterinsurgency and military assistance. Vietnam was in many respects the archetypical postwar Third World crisis, with the application of massive US military power to suppress a Communist insurgency.

American policy had a political dimension as well, which sought to find a workable democratic middle ground between repressive authoritarianism and the sort of revolutionary change supported by the Soviet Union. Hence the United States played a major role in encouraging decolonization in former Dutch, French, and British territories, supported land reform in Vietnam and more lately El Salvador, gave out generous amounts of economic assistance to promote long-term economic growth, and in the late 1970s tried to lay increased emphasis on human rights. In this sense, US policy was not strictly speaking supportive of the status quo, but rather of moderate political reform. In practice the development of democratic Third World alternatives proved extremely difficult to bring about and remained more of a goal than an actuality.

There were, of course, significant exceptions to this overall pattern. The US challenged the status quo and in some cases sought to roll back Soviet gains in Korea and Vietnam, and individual American clients like Israel made gains at the expense of Soviet allies.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union for its part faced the problem of maintaining the status quo in areas where its policy had been successful, and spent considerable effort trying to hang on to clients like Egypt, Indonesia, Cuba, and Somalia. Nonetheless, generally speaking US actions against Soviet positions in the Third World (such as crossing the 38th parallel in Korea or the bombing of North Vietnam) were tactically offensive responses to prior Soviet-supported initiatives in which the United States remained on the strategic defensive. Moreover, challenges to the Soviet-supported status quo came about mostly as a result of high-level

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<sup>2</sup> There were, in addition, some cases of attempted and on occasion successful rollback as a result of covert intervention, including Iran in 1952, Guatemala in 1954, Syria in 1957, and Cuba in 1961.



shifts on the part of client state leaderships, and not from broadly-based domestic opposition movements.

### III. CHANGES IN THE THIRD WORLD ENVIRONMENT

By the end of the 1970s a number of changes had occurred in the overall Third World environment that had an important effect on the relative positions of the US and the Soviet Union.

The first of these changes was the growth of Soviet military power and other instruments of leverage. On a strategic level, the Soviet Union had achieved parity or better with the United States by the early 1970s. While it is doubtful that the growth of the Soviet strategic arsenal can be translated directly into meaningful political leverage in local crises, it has succeeded in deterring the United States from any consideration of resort to nuclear weapons in response to Soviet-sponsored challenges<sup>3</sup>, particularly in peripheral Third World theaters. Although strategic superiority never had the deterrent effect in the Third World that was hoped for in the Dulles era, it is possible to document at least one instance when Soviet behavior was restrained as a result of the fear of US nuclear escalation.<sup>4</sup> On a conventional level, Soviet acquisition of substantial power projection forces and an accompanying base structure to support them has permitted much more active intervention than in the past. At the time of the Suez Crisis in 1956, for example, Soviet Defense Minister Zhukov is said to have responded to a demand for intervention by Syrian President Kuwatly by saying:

How can we go to the aid of Egypt? Tell me! Are we supposed to send our armies through Turkey, Iran, and then into Syria and Iraq and on into Israel and so eventually attack the British and French forces?<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Persian Gulf may be one exception to this generalization.

<sup>4</sup> For example, during the 1958 Lebanese-Iraqi crisis, Khrushchev reportedly refused a request by Egyptian president Nasser to intervene on behalf of the new regime in Iraq by telling him "frankly, we are not ready for a confrontation. We are not ready for World War Three... Dulles could blow the whole world to pieces." Mohamed Haykal, *Nasser: the Cairo Documents* (London: New English Library, 1972) pp. 131-132.

By 1970, when the USSR sent nearly 20,000 air defense troops to Egypt to defend the interior against Israeli deep-penetration attacks, the Soviets could no longer plead lack of capability for failing to intervene in Third World crises, and each of its subsequent major involvements, including the October 1973 War, Angola, the Horn of Africa, and Afghanistan, demonstrated the effectiveness of these new capabilities.

A second change has been the emergence of Cuba and other proxies like the East Germans as major actors in the Third World. There is by now a *de facto* division of labor in the Third World to support pro-Soviet regimes and national liberation movements which suggests a fairly high degree of organization and systemic mutual support. The same countries have been active in a variety of geographically remote countries, with Cuba providing military manpower, the East Germans restructuring internal security services, Czechs and North Koreans providing arms and technical assistance, the Soviets providing overall logistical support, etc. The Cubans have facilitated Soviet support by providing clients with substantial numbers of ground forces (substantial, that is, in the context of the Third World) without provoking the strong American response that would accompany direct Soviet intervention. They have moreover played an important role in seeing opportunities for action, in many cases before the Soviets themselves.<sup>6</sup>

The third change has been in American willingness to intervene in Third World conflicts following its experience in Vietnam. The most clearcut example of this was passage of the Clark amendment forbidding US assistance to any of the contending groups during the Angolan civil war in December 1975. The Reagan Administration has followed a somewhat more activist policy in central American, Lebanon, and the Caribbean, and there was considerable public approbation for the intervention in

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<sup>5</sup> Mohamed Haykal, *The Sphinx and the Commissar* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> The best example of this is Nicaragua, where up to 1979 the Soviets were counseling the pro-Moscow Nicaraguan Socialist Party against premature attempts to overthrow Somoza.

Grenada. It should be clear, however, that Grenada was popular only because it was short, successful, and relatively costless. The protracted guerilla war in El Salvador is much more representative of Third World conflicts, and it is clear that the American Congress and public opinion will simply not support a substantially greater level of US involvement.

The cumulative effect of these first three changes has led to a fourth, namely, a major change in the nature of the Soviet client base. To some extent the difference is simply a quantitative one: while the Soviets have lost some major clients like Egypt and Somalia, a decade of intense activism in the Third World has produced a net gain in the number of Third World allies and an upgrading of Moscow's position in others (e.g., Vietnam). The most important change is a qualitative one, however, in the internal character of the new client states. In 1964, the Soviet Union had only three self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist clients in the Third World: North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba. Twenty years later, not only have these regimes remained in power, but they have been joined by thirteen others: Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Laos, Kampuchea, Madagascar, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Benin, and the People's Republic of the Congo.<sup>7</sup>

Of these, the first six are fairly major countries within their regions and in terms of the US-Soviet global competition. The sudden proliferation of new Marxist-Leninist states since 1975 is no accident: the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other bloc allies have been instrumental in bringing to power or subsequently sustaining almost all of them.

The fact that these regimes are willing to declare themselves adherents of 'scientific' socialism sets them off clearly from Soviet clients of an earlier generation<sup>8</sup>. In the 50s and 60s Moscow's major

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<sup>7</sup> This list does not include the Marxist-Leninist regime in Grenada prior to its overthrow by the United States in October 1983.

<sup>8</sup> The criterion used here for identifying a Marxist-Leninist state is simply whether the leadership of the state officially declares it as such. Actual implementation of a Marxist-Leninist program is not a useful measure, since (1) there is a certain amount of disagreement both inside and outside the socialist camp as to what exactly this constitutes, and (2) no state, including the Soviet Union, has ever fully implemented scientific socialism. The Soviets acknowledge only

Third World allies were a heterogeneous collection of left-wing nationalist states which found common ground with the Soviet Union primarily in an anti-imperialist foreign policy. States like Egypt, Indonesia, Guinea, India, Algeria and Iraq explicitly made a point of rejecting orthodox Marxism-Leninism in favor of a variety of syncretist doctrines which combined vaguely socialist programs with a healthy degree of local nationalism. The latter element over time tended to make them highly unreliable allies, a fact which Soviet commentators had already begun to point out by the mid-60s. Apart from Cuba, none of these left-wing bourgeois nationalist states adopted scientific socialism as an ideology, and several, including Egypt and Somalia, defected from the Soviet camp altogether.

A number of observers have maintained that the impact of Marxism is very superficial throughout the Third World and that the new Marxist-Leninist regimes are just as nationalist as those of the earlier generation. We will suspend judgment for now on whether these regimes are more Marxist or nationalist in orientation: obviously, no state is exclusively one or the other, and the real question concerns exactly where on that continuum they lie. Nonetheless, the six more important Marxist-Leninist regimes have at least four common characteristics which set them off from Moscow's non-Communist clients:

(1) Internally, five of the six are governed by Leninist vanguard parties which have consolidated their own power and have proceeded to create a variety of highly centralized, top-down hierarchical state institutions.<sup>9</sup> All six have pursued to varying degrees socialist domestic programs involving nationalization of large parts of the national economy, collectivization of agriculture and industry, creation of powerful internal security organs, etc.

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Cuba, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea as states of 'developed socialism' on a level (politically, at least) with the regimes in Eastern Europe; the rest are labeled 'revolutionary democracies' or states of a 'socialist orientation.'

<sup>9</sup> Formal establishment of vanguard parties took place in Angola and Mozambique in 1977, the PDRY in 1978, and Ethiopia in 1984. The PDPA in Afghanistan began as an orthodox Communist party, while the FSLN in Nicaragua remains a national liberation movement.

(2) In terms of foreign policy, each of the six has aligned itself closely with the Soviet Union. Five of the six have signed Treaties of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow,<sup>10</sup> and all vote consistently with the Soviet bloc in fora like the United Nations. These states have also created a complicated network of ties among themselves, with Eastern European bloc members like East Germany and Bulgaria, or with other sympathetic non-Communist state and substate actors (e.g., Libya, Iraq, the PLO) participating in the larger socialist 'collective security system'. Each has also lent generous support to like-minded national liberation movements seeking to come to power. Angola, for example, has supported the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the Front for the National Liberation of the Congo in Zaire, Mozambique Robert Mugabe's ZANU before it came to power in Zimbabwe and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, South Yemen the National Democratic Front (NDF) in North Yemen and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Occupied Arab Gulf, Nicaragua the guerillas in El Salvador, etc.

(3) In the military sphere, the new Marxist-Leninist regimes have cooperated closely with the Soviet bloc and have permitted Soviet forces access to air and naval facilities on their territory. Indeed, states like Angola and Afghanistan have been able to remain in power only with substantial Soviet bloc military support. The Soviets have anchorages and port facilities in the PDRY and Ethiopia, a series of modern airbases in Afghanistan, and landing rights and port priveleges in Angola and Mozambique. Other non-Communist Soviet clients like Egypt and Syria have also cooperated with Moscow in a similar fashion, but only after prolonged Soviet cajoling and the pressure of circumstances forced them to do so.<sup>11</sup> The new regimes, on the other hand, have

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<sup>10</sup> The one exception is Nicaragua, which has probably not signed a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty for fear on the part of both patron and client of unduly provoking the United States. See Zafar Imam, "Soviet Treaties with Third World Countries", *Soviet Studies*, Jan. 1983.

<sup>11</sup> In a series of visits to Cairo in the mid-60s, Admiral Gorshkov pressed Nasser for access to port facilities in Alexandria and elsewhere, a request that was consistently refused until Egypt's defeat in the June 1967 war.

cooperated with the Soviet and Cuban military from the outset and with much less evident reluctance.

(4) Finally, each of the new regimes has demonstrated considerable weakness and lack of internal legitimacy, and each is the object of an indigenous national liberation guerilla movement. This weakness might be expected as a natural outgrowth of the simple quantitative expansion of Moscow's client base, but the problems that these regimes currently face can be traced back to their underlying ideological orientation. Major Soviet clients of the 1950s and 60s like India, Egypt, and Indonesia were relatively well-established states with long prior cultural and historical traditions. Each had emerged out of colonialism largely as a result of its own efforts, under the leadership of men like Nehru, Nasser, or Sukharno, who could claim stature as nationalist leaders. While the fortunes of these individuals rose and fell, the regimes they represented by and large enjoyed a certain broad popular support and nationalist legitimacy. The new Marxist-Leninist regimes, by contrast, either came to power with the help of the Soviet bloc, or else required such help to stay in power. They were led by movements which expressed loyalty to certain internationalist ideals which were overtly at odds with local nationalism, and by leaders with neither stature nor broad recognition.

Perhaps best known of the groups fighting the new Marxist-Leninist regimes are the Afghan resistance fighters, or mujahedeen, who began battling the regime of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) beginning in mid-1978 and whose initial successes provoked the massive Soviet invasion in December 1979. The PDPA is clearly the weakest of the six new regimes and would without question be swept away were it not for the Soviet presence; in spite of their poor organization and disunity the mujahedeen control most of the countryside and in selected areas like the Panjshir Valley have set up their own system of administration. While certain of the resistance groups have received outside help from the United States, China, and other Islamic and pro-Western sources, the bulk of their supplies are derived internally.

In Angola, Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) controls and administers nearly one third of the country's territory and operates freely in as much as another



third, reducing the MPLA regime's writ to the capital of Luanda and its environs. Based on Angola's largest tribal group, the Ovimbundu, UNITA is more highly organized than the Afghan mujahedeen and administers a relatively well-disciplined guerilla army and large network of schools, hospitals, etc. Savimbi has for several years been receiving support from South Africa, but even his enemies admit that he is not a South African puppet. A charismatic figure who was trained in guerilla warfare in China, Savimbi poses a threat to the MPLA regime so severe that it is doubtful it could survive without the presence of upwards of 20,000 Cuban troops.

In Mozambique the Frelimo regime has been opposed by the Mozambique National Resistance (RMN, or Renamo). Renamo was originally created by the white Rhodesian regime as a means of getting back at Frelimo for its support of Robert Mugabe's ZANU, and after the Zimbabwean settlement it was turned over to South Africa. Although its membership includes disaffected members of Frelimo, tribal elements, and former Portuguese settlers, it was to a much greater extent than UNITA a creation of Pretoria, though as the organization matured it has begun to take on a life of its own.<sup>12</sup> Renamo has conducted terrorist and sabotage operations, chiefly against economic targets, in all but one of Mozambique's provinces and has succeeded in crippling several crucial sectors of the Mozambican economy.

The Sandinista regime in Nicaragua has been opposed by a number of groups collectively known as the *contras*. The oldest of these groups, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), was composed initially of ex-National Guardsmen. As the revolution moved further left they were joined by others, including the Misura Revolutionary Front and the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (ARDE) led at one point by former Sandinista Eden Pastora and Alfonso Robelo, a member of the original junta that deposed Somoza. CIA support for the *contras* has been well publicized and the issue has become highly politicized in the US, making any objective assessment of their indigenous support and power difficult. Nonetheless, the groups collectively have been able to field well upwards of 10,000 guerillas, compared to the 9,000 leftist

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<sup>12</sup> See Sean Gervasi, "South Africa's Terrorist Army," *Southern Africa*, December 1982.

guerillas said to be operating in El Salvador, a country with nearly twice Nicaragua's population.

Ethiopia has been subject to numerous separatist national liberation movements on the part of its constituent ethnic groups. In addition to the Eritreans, the largest and most important separatist group, the Tigreans, Oromos, Somalis and others have been battling the Amhara-dominated regime in Addis Ababa.<sup>13</sup> The three Eritrean organizations<sup>14</sup> are the only major national liberation movements fighting a Marxist regime which themselves claim to be Marxists. They were initially supported by both the Soviet Union and Cuba as a means of putting pressure on Haile Selassie, and continue to be supported by Cuba which has urged the regime in Addis to seek a diplomatic solution to the Eritrean problem.

The PDRY has faced the least severe internal challenges, though in the past it too has been opposed by a variety of tribal and other groups, including the Army of National Salvation and the National United Front, supported by Saudi Arabia and North Yemen respectively. Attempts by these two groups to overthrow the regime in Aden led to a brief border war between North and South Yemen in 1972, and since that time the other conservative states of the Gulf have supported desultory efforts on the part of emigre groups to destabilize the south.<sup>15</sup>

The sixteen existing pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist regimes in the Third World do not by any means exhaust the totality of Soviet activities and clients there. Moscow retains strong relationships with a number of important non-Communist states, including Syria, Iraq, India, and Libya. After Cuba and Vietnam, it is three non-Marxist regimes (India, Syria, and Libya) that have received the lion's share of Soviet military and economic assistance and trade with the Third World. It is clear that where there is no better alternative ideologically, the

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<sup>13</sup> Ethiopia's leader Mengistu Haile Mariam is himself a Galla.

<sup>14</sup> These include the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF), and the Eritrean Liberation Front - Popular Liberation Forces (ELF-PLF).

<sup>15</sup> See Laurie Mylroie, *Politics and the Soviet Presence in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, N-2052-AF, Dec. 1983).

Soviets will cooperate with anyone willing to cooperate with them. Indeed, states like Libya have proven to be more active participants in the socialist collective security system than many of the orthodox Communist clients. Nonetheless, the proliferation of Third World Marxist-Leninist states constitutes a major development in the broader international environment, one that is likely to have certain systemic consequences.

To sum up, in the decade between 1974 and 1984 the Soviet Union and its allies developed the political and military instruments to help put into place and sustain a number of narrowly-based Marxist-Leninist regimes, which have proven to be more susceptible to Soviet influence and control, but at the same time weaker and more vulnerable to internal challenges. These changes do not imply a net gain in Soviet influence in the Third World: expansion in the number of Marxist-Leninist clients must be balanced against the fact that they are by and large weaker and less well placed strategically than those of an earlier generation. But they do suggest a qualitatively different environment for superpower interactions in a variety of Third World theaters.

#### IV. THE CHARACTER OF FUTURE US-SOVIET INTERACTIONS

##### Soviets v. Americans

In many respects, future US-Soviet interactions in the Third World will look quite similar to the predominant postwar pattern, i.e., with the Soviets seeking to expand their influence in the developing world through support of challenges to the status quo, and the United States seeking to contain those challenges. Moscow will continue to number bourgeois nationalist regimes like those in Syria, India, and Libya among its most important clients, and will seek to encourage others as they appear.

The two factors affecting the extent and character of future Soviet-supported challenges to the status quo will then be: (1) Moscow's inherent propensity for intervention and risk-taking, in the context of overall US-Soviet relations, and (2) the opportunities for Soviet and Soviet-bloc intervention provided by developments in the Third World itself.

Sorting out the relative impact of these two factors is extremely difficult to do. Following the extraordinary burst of Soviet activism in the Third World between 1975 and 1980, Moscow has been relatively quiescent in the first half of the 1980s. Some have argued that this represents an autonomous change in Soviet risk-taking propensities, that is, deliberate restraint on the part of the USSR. Such restraint could be the product of a number of considerations, including the costs of assimilating past gains, caution in the face of an apparently tougher US administration, economic constraints, concentration on European security problems, or preoccupation with internal problems including the Brezhnev succession process. On the other hand, one could argue that the Soviets have not undertaken new initiatives simply for lack of opportunities. Soviet activities in Africa, after all, came only in response to the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire after 1974, and were not themselves responsible for bringing it about; comparable developments simply did not take place between 1980 and 1985.

It is this author's view that Soviet quiescence is in fact to be explained more by the lack of opportunities than by self-imposed restraint, or at least, that the case for the latter cannot be conclusively established on the basis of available information.<sup>16</sup> It is hard to see how a Soviet leadership with higher risk-taking propensities would have responded differently to the major developments in the Third World of the early 1980s, such as the Iran-Iraq war, the Falklands crisis, the 1982 Lebanon War, or the ongoing crisis in Central America. Apart from crisis behavior, Soviet military and economic support of its major clients (e.g., Cuba, Vietnam, India, Afghanistan, etc.) has continued at earlier levels and in some cases even increased. Only in Angola and Mozambique could the case be made that the Soviets have done less than they could to support their clients, but even here it is less than conclusive.

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<sup>16</sup> There is some evidence of an internal Soviet debate over whether to retrench in the Third World following the death of Brezhnev, with some in the leadership arguing for a scaling back of economic commitments to the Third World (or at least redirecting them towards Europe). See Stephen Sestanovich, "Do the Soviets Feel Pinched by Third World Adventures?", *Washington Post*, May 20, 1984.

If Soviet risk-taking propensities in fact remain what they were in the late 1970s, then the likelihood of future Soviet challenges to the status quo will depend primarily on what opportunities for intervention arise in the Third World itself. In many respects the US-Soviet agenda will look similar to that of earlier decades, beginning with the Middle East.

Though it will continue to be a major preoccupation for Soviet policymakers, the Arab-Israeli half of the Middle East does not appear to be a promising area for substantial Soviet gains. Setbacks to Soviet influence over the past decade have been due to a number of factors, including Israel's military predominance over its Arab adversaries and the strength of the US-Israeli tie, Moscow's lack of viable intervention options, and the unpredictable character of Arab politics. Moscow's principal client in the region, Syria, is representative of the older generation of non-Communist nationalist Soviet allies, having maintained a prickly independence from its patron over the years. The Soviets have few instruments of leverage over Damascus other than their ability to provide enormous quantities of military assistance, which in turn has drawn the Soviets into often unwanted military confrontations with Israel and the United States. While unforeseen intra- or interstate instability could lead to future Soviet gains, nothing currently on the horizon suggests that Moscow's situation will improve; in particular, it seems quite unlikely that the Soviets will be able to deliver a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict of the sort desired by its radical clients.

On the other hand, Moscow's ability to remain a player in the Arab-Israeli theater in spite of these evident weaknesses is in many ways remarkable. Patient Soviet cultivation of Syria through traditional and not terribly imaginative foreign policy instruments has had its desired effect: while the Soviets have not been able to shape political outcomes in ways they would have liked, they have been quite successful in blocking US initiatives. Lebanon provides a good example of Moscow's negative leverage: while it was unable to defend either Syria or the PLO against the Israeli invasion in 1982, it did contribute to the blocking of an Israeli-sponsored settlement thereafter through its military support of Syria.

The potential for Soviet advances in the Persian Gulf seems to be much greater than in the Arab-Israeli case. The acute concern felt in the West over potential Soviet threats to the security of Persian Gulf oil in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan have diminished somewhat in recent years due to weaknesses in the world oil market and the absence of major crises like the Iranian revolution. But while the darker interpretations of Soviet motives -- i.e., that Afghanistan was merely the prelude to a major move on the Gulf itself -- have proven wrong, it would be a serious mistake to discount the dangers of US-Soviet conflict in this region. Common sense suggests that the conservative pro-Western states of the Arabian peninsula remain candidates for instability, despite their success thus far in meeting the political and social challenges of rapid economic modernization. Western dependence on Persian Gulf oil remains high and subject to future, quite unpredictable shifts in the world energy market; and in any case *Soviet* control over access to oil would have a political impact far greater than its mere economic significance would suggest. There are any number of plausible scenarios which would motivate the Soviets to intervene in the Gulf, such as instability following the death of Khomeini in Iran.<sup>17</sup> Moscow could act not only to secure the "offensive" gains implicit in control over Persian Gulf oil, but for subjectively "defensive" ones as well, for example the protection of a sympathetic left-wing regime threatened by pro-Western forces in Iran or Saudi Arabia. The Persian Gulf remains the only Third World theater in which the stakes and the probability of instability are high enough to lead to direct and large-scale US-Soviet military conflict.

How the Soviets would respond to opportunities raised by a crisis in the Gulf are very difficult to predict. While potential gains may be great, the risks of intervention will be enormous as well, particularly in view of Washington's efforts after 1979 to create a viable conventional intervention capability for the Gulf. American policy, in turn, is likely to center primarily around raising the costs and risks

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<sup>17</sup> For further discussion of such scenarios, see my chapter "Escalation in the Middle East and Persian Gulf" in Graham Allison, Albert Carnesale, and Joseph Nye, eds., *Hawks, Doves, and Owls* (Norton, 1985, forthcoming).



to large-scale Soviet intervention in the Gulf, as well as attempting to mitigate the underlying causes of instability that might invite intervention (over which it will have very little influence).

Central America and the Caribbean basin may well provide further opportunities for Soviet advances, given the economic backwardness and fragility of the political systems of many of the countries there. Given the imbalance of interests and capabilities for military intervention between the US and USSR, however, it is unlikely that the Caribbean basin will be more than an irritant to US-Soviet relations and an issue for domestic American politics. While testing the limits of US patience on issues like arms deliveries to Nicaragua, the Soviets do not appear to be willing to take large chances either to promote fresh revolutions or to support existing regimes.

Finally, there is the potential for instability and consequently Soviet influence in entirely new areas, such as the Philippines. Currently the Soviets do not have strong ties with the pro-Chinese Communist Party of the Philippines and its military wing, the New People's Army, which in any case is not representative of the broad spectrum of groups and social forces opposing the current regime. Moscow's policy thus far has been limited to rather hypocritical efforts to woo Marcos at the expense of the United States. But should the Marcos regime and/or the military continue to stay in power, there is the potential for a steady leftward shift of the Philippino opposition which may at some future date seek Soviet support.

#### **Americans v. Soviets**

Apart from the familiar scenarios and issues cited above, the larger changes in the environment for US-Soviet interactions in the Third World noted in the previous section may lead to something of a role reversal between the United States and the Soviet Union. That is, the Soviets may find themselves trying to defend the status quo, while the United States, its allies and associates offer up challenges to it. Of course, the Soviet Union has not always supported change: to the degree that Moscow was successful in promoting the fortunes of clients and associated movements in the Third World in earlier decades, it developed vested interests in certain aspects of the existing status

quo. What is new is the number and seriousness of the opportunities for American-sponsored threats to the status quo, and the possibility that such challenges could move to the forefront of the US-Soviet agenda and become the *dominant* mode of conflict.

At first glance, it might seem that such an environment were it to emerge would be highly advantageous for the United States. It is generally easier for outside powers to support guerilla wars than to help suppress them, and after several decades of steady Soviet expansion in the Third World, the opportunity for the rollback of Soviet influence under the banner of genuinely popular national liberation movements will seem highly attractive. While this may in the end prove to be true, both superpowers will be faced with a very unfamiliar set of problems. The United States in particular will face a number of significant constraints in adjusting to this type of environment, and in managing this new mode of conflict with the Soviet Union in the Third World.

#### **Future Issues for US Policy**

The chief issue for future American policy in the Third World will be how best to deal with Soviet clients like Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua, and how to manage challenges to the Soviet-supported status quo. One possible approach to this question is to deny that it is an issue at all because the United States should not be in the business of supporting efforts to destabilize Soviet client regimes. Unfortunately, the issue is not likely to go away quite so easily. In the first place, one need not think about the problem simply in terms of destabilization, which is simply a means to an end. In many instances the objective of US policy would be to wean away Soviet clients from close embrace with Moscow, or to change their external behavior and make it more compatible with American interests -- objectives on which many Americans would agree. Moreover, the new Marxist-Leninist states tend as a rule to be rather egregious violators of human rights, while many of the resistance groups opposing them have managed to attract broad popular support in their own countries and would have a great deal of appeal even to that segment of liberal opinion normally hostile to US intervention in the Third World. Finally, future US administrations (and not just the current one) are likely to want to make use of the leverage that threats to the Soviet-supported status quo can provide.

Unlike the Soviet Union, the United States does not come to this problem with an elaborate doctrine for supporting wars of national liberation and guerilla organizations seeking to overthrow legal governments. In fact, US policymakers will be encumbered by a number of cultural and historical preconceptions which serve as obstacles to formulation of effective policies in this regard.

The first is the tendency of Americans at both ends of the political spectrum to regard force and diplomacy as two mutually exclusive approaches to foreign policy. This cast of mind can be traced back at least as far as the Wilsonian view of a liberal international order, in which normal relationships between states are governed exclusively by law, while force is reserved as a punishment of last resort for states challenging that order. It is a point of view which lawyers, so prevalent in the American foreign policy establishment, seem to find particularly congenial. In dealing with revolutionary situations and Marxist-Leninist governments, liberals as a general rule tend to prefer negotiations and 'peaceful solutions', while conservatives tend to prefer military pressure and outright force; both think of their chosen paths as alternatives to one another. Hence it is argued that support for the *contras* is incompatible with encouragement of the Contadora peace process, since no regime can be expected to negotiate under such duress.

The disagreement between liberals and conservatives regarding methods for dealing with Soviet client regimes reflects a more basic disagreement over the nature of these regimes themselves. Whenever a new leftist government, whether Marxist or not, comes to power in the Third World, the US public debate is usually polarized between two conflicting views about its nature, virtually without reference to facts about its actual character. On the one hand, liberals tend to insist that the new regime like most others in the Third World is much more nationalist than Marxist, that its socialist and anti-imperialist rhetoric is merely talk and will give way to more pragmatic policies once its rulers confront the problems of underdevelopment. To the extent that it receives assistance from Moscow or Havana, they will argue that the country has been forced to accept this aid only as a result of prior

or continuing American hostility. Conservatives, on the other hand, tend to see the regime as a Soviet puppet which will follow certain ironclad rules of social development and turn into a carbon copy of the Soviet state; they are likely to dismiss evidence of gradual moderation on the part of the regime and serious differences with Moscow.

Both of these points of view are partially right and partially wrong, and dogmatic adherence to either one can lead to major failures of judgment and policy. For example, a number of specialists on Afghanistan characterized the Khalq regime which toppled Prime Minister Daud and seized power on April 27, 1979, as a group of "agrarian reformers" and "pragmatic nationalists" who would maintain Afghanistan's traditional non-aligned foreign policy. Those who saw more sinister implications in the PDPA takeover were attacked for their 'neanderthal' views well after the coup.<sup>18</sup> On the other side of the ledger, there were those who as late as the 1975 Sinai II disengagement agreements dismissed Sadat's overtures to the United States as no more than a trick designed to elicit greater levels of Soviet support. Both errors of judgment can lead to serious policy blunders, a failure to recognize and respond to Soviet-sponsored subversion on the one hand and the missing of opportunities for negotiated settlement of disputes on the other.

An effective policy for dealing with Soviet clients<sup>19</sup> must begin with an analysis, free from preconceptions, of their underlying character on a case-by-case basis. One of the factors to be considered is their ideological self-conception since, as noted in the previous section, Marxist-Leninist states tend to behave in consistent ways. But the analysis must go well beyond this level: doctrine is interpreted and implemented differently from client to client. Some Communist states like Afghanistan are so dominated by the Soviet Union that it is absurd to consider weaning them out of the Soviet orbit, while others like Mozambique have demonstrated a much greater degree of independence and are likely to be considerably more susceptible to US overtures. Knowing

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<sup>18</sup> See Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parchar and Khalq* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 61.

<sup>19</sup> The term 'client' is used here broadly to signify any state retaining aid and trade relations, particularly in the military sphere, with the Soviet Union. It does not necessarily imply a high degree of Soviet influence over the local state.

where Soviet clients fall along this spectrum can only be determined empirically.

Whether one's objective is to wean away the client or to try to replace it altogether, the US approach must be one which combines diplomacy and force simultaneously. These are not alternative methods but two sides of the same dialectical coin: Sandinista interest in the Contadora process or direct talks with the United States, far from being incompatible with US support for the *contras*, is in fact motivated by the latter. For those who think that these two elements cannot be combined, I will offer three examples of instances in which this has occurred.

The first case is that of Egypt, referred to earlier. Henry Kissinger had the perspicacity (or perhaps luck) to recognize at the time of the October 1973 War that Sadat, in contrast to other Arab leaders, was interested in a long-term settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. This outcome was by no means predetermined, however, and was only brought about by persistent US efforts to act as an intermediary, through the two Sinai disengagements, Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, and the Camp David process. On the other hand, some observers fail to recognize that Egypt's interest in negotiations came about only as a result of four previous costly military defeats by Israel, and the consistency of US military support for Israel throughout this period up to and including the signing of the final Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Sadat in his memoirs makes very clear that his decision to pursue limited aims in the October War and a negotiated settlement thereafter did not proceed from any love of Israel, but from his recognition that the United States would act decisively to prevent Israel from being defeated militarily. It was the cost of continued armed struggle and the war-weariness this had engendered throughout all segments of the Egyptian population that made negotiations and peace possible.

Egypt's case differs from those of the newer Marxist-Leninist clients noted above insofar as the *type* of force used against it was Israel's conventional military power, and not external support for internal opposition to the regime in Cairo. While Egypt may not serve as an exact model for future Soviet clients, the Egyptian case is raised here to underline the fact that even the most spectacular American

diplomatic successes of recent years were rooted in elementary considerations of power politics.

The second example is the Shah of Iran's support for Kurdish nationalists inside Iraq that ultimately led to signature of the Algiers Agreement in 1975 and resolution of the outstanding border dispute between Baghdad and Teheran. The Ba'athist regime in Iraq had signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow in 1972 and underwent a substantial arms buildup during the early 70s, supporting a wide variety of terrorist and subversive organizations throughout the Middle East, including several inside Iran<sup>20</sup>. The Kurdish war proved to be a continuing drain on Iraqi military and economic resources, however, and forced Baghdad to come to terms with the Shah. The Algiers Agreement did not change the fundamental character of the Ba'athist regime, of course, as its subsequent renunciation of the accord after the fall of the Shah proved, but it did lead to considerable restraint on external Iraqi behavior for nearly four years while the Iranian military and political system was strong enough to enforce good behavior.

The final example is South Africa's support for Renamo inside Mozambique. Unlike the previous two Soviet clients, the Frelimo government in Maputo is a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regime which received substantial help from the Soviet bloc while it was still a guerilla organization fighting the Portugese; it quickly established ties to Moscow after coming to power, accepted arms and help from a number of Soviet bloc sources, and gave substantial support to a variety of national liberation movements fighting the white settler regimes in neighboring Rhodesia and South Africa. Pretoria held quite a number of levers over Mozambique, however, which it exploited with great ruthlessness: aside from providing Renamo with arms and sanctuary and establishing the Voice of Free Africa radio in the Transvaal, it could threaten the earnings of the large numbers of Mozambican guest workers employed in South Africa which were critical to the Mozambican economy. South African military forces responded to operations by the African National Congress with large-scale reprisal raids against their bases

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<sup>20</sup> The Iraqis gave refuge to the Ayatollah Khomeini at this time as an option against the Shah, a policy that would later return to haunt them.



inside Mozambique. As a result of this relentless military and economic pressure, Samora Machel was driven to sign the Nkomati ceasefire agreement with South Africa earlier this year in which Mozambique agreed to end support for the ANC and other black nationalist organizations in return for Pretoria's agreement to stop assistance to Renamo.

The Mozambican case contains interesting lessons for both conservatives and liberals. For conservatives who might have thought that Frelimo was ideologically rigid and hopelessly ensnared in a dependency on the Soviet bloc, the regime in Maputo has demonstrated that it is much more interested in its own survival than in Marxism. It has done a number of rather un-Marxist things like seeking assistance from Western multinational corporations and training in counterinsurgency warfare from the Portuguese military. There are also rumors that its collaboration with South Africa on a variety of economic and security issues may be much more far-reaching than initially thought at the time the Nkomati accord was signed. But there are lessons for liberals as well: this result was not brought about by talking politely to Frelimo and showering it with economic assistance, but through an extremely hardheaded policy of support for internal destabilization on the part of South Africa. Pretoria was not interested in overthrowing Frelimo per se, but in neutralizing those aspects of its external policy that were most threatening to it, and combined both military and diplomatic means to achieve this result.

In dealing with Soviet clients, the United States obviously cannot behave like the Shah of Iran or South Africa. An American policy to support changes in the Soviet-sponsored status quo, which is already being carried out to a limited extent in Afghanistan and Nicaragua, would encounter a number of problems arising from the nature of the American political system itself. The first lies in the all too common inability of American administrations to establish strategic goals and a long-term plan for what the policy is intended to accomplish. There are three broad alternatives: (1) the US could simply hope to impose costs on Soviet clients and the Soviet Union itself, thereby creating disincentive for further adventurism in the Third World; (2) it could seek to overthrow the client government and replace it with a regime more sympathetic to the West; or (3) it could try to build sufficient

pressure on the client state to seek a political solution that would neutralize the threat it presents to the region and break it out of the Soviet orbit. Each one of these alternatives presents specific difficulties.

If the US is merely seeking to impose costs on the client and its Soviet backers with no hope of ultimately being able to change the character of the regime, it will incur upon itself a certain moral obligation to support the resistance organization consistently and in the face of possible Soviet or Soviet client retaliation. In the past the United States has unfortunately not had a very good record of consistency in its support for Third World clients, particularly when that support proved costly or risky. Commitments taken up by one administration, particularly informal ones of the sort that would be made to resistance groups, are all too easily broken by subsequent ones, or even when the same administration undergoes a change of heart. In other cases US support may provoke a strong Soviet reaction and even lead to the pro-Western group's destruction. The Soviets have faced this situation frequently in the past, as when Stalin's advice to the Chinese Communists to form a common front with the Kuomintang led to the former's suppression by Chiang Kai-Shek in 1927.<sup>21</sup>

If the US hopes to actually overthrow the regime in power, it must then bear responsibility for what follows. In the case of someone like Savimbi or in prior interventions like the Dominican Republic or Grenada, the result may not be so bad, but one cannot always choose the enemies of one's enemies. The prime example of this is Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge in Kampuchea, whose genocidal policies have presented an insurmountable obstacle to US aid of any sort, much less actual

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<sup>21</sup> Some have questioned the morality of supporting the efforts of resistance groups like the Afghan mujahedeen where the chances of ultimate success are very small, prolonging a hopeless and costly struggle. My own view is that the fundamental moral choice has already been made by the groups themselves, who seek US support and will continue to fight and die whether they receive it or not. In any event it is often very difficult to know when a situation is hopeless, since many long-shot opposition parties, including the Bolsheviks themselves, have succeeded in coming to power. In other cases US support will take on the appearance of state-sponsored terrorism, of which the United States has accused the Soviet Union and denounced as a matter of principle.

restoration of the former regime. In other cases like the FDN in Nicaragua, the US might help an authoritarian right-wing regime return to power which may become a source of considerable subsequent embarrassment to the United States. While the Afghan mujahedeen have attracted considerable sympathy in the US, individual commanders like Gulbadin Hekmatyar (who bears certain similarities to the Ayatollah Khomeini) may not look terribly attractive as leaders of a post-PDPA Afghanistan. Moreover, while the Soviet Union has had much practice dealing with extralegal entities seeking to undermine legal governments, the United States is in principle opposed to such practices. Such policies will run counter to other US positions in countries like El Salvador, where the United States has taken a stand against power-sharing on the grounds that insurgents should not be allowed to 'shoot their way into office.'

If the United States hopes to use anti-Communist national liberation groups as an instrument of leverage to force Soviet clients to moderate their behavior, it will be subject to charges that it has sold out the movement that it was supporting. Even though it was not directly responsible for the Algiers Agreement, the Ford Administration received considerable criticism, including some from right-wing sources, for having condoned the Shah's betrayal of the Kurds. This type of agreement, common enough in diplomatic practice (witness the Molotov - von Ribbentrop pact), requires a type of flexibility and cynicism which generally does not sit well with Americans. There is a certain principled and ideological streak in American foreign policy which encourages Americans to divide the world into more or less permanent friends and enemies, and makes them suspicious of shifting alliances and deals with dictators.

A final issue that arises is the question of whether these anti-Communist national liberation movements will in all cases be better off with American assistance. US management of military aid programs has often had a rather suffocating effect on its intended beneficiaries. Jonas Savimbi's UNITA has been prospering for several years now without having received a cent of American assistance, whereas the Afghans, who evidently are the targets of considerable assistance, continually claim that they are short of supplies. US support may taint an otherwise

credible organization like Eden Pastora's ARDE in Nicaragua and actually reduce its chances of coming to power.

In the end, domestic factors are likely to exert the greatest constraint on any US policy designed to assist anti-Soviet resistance groups or movements. While some causes like that of the Afghan mujahedeen will engender considerable public support (indeed, Congress to some extent has been out in front of the Reagan Administration on this issue), others like the Nicaraguan *contras* will continue to be controversial. US policymakers need to consider very carefully the domestic reaction before undertaking a policy of support for internal opponents of Soviet clients. The worst of all worlds is a situation in which the United States begins aiding a Third World client or group and then is forced to pull the rug out from underneath it for lack of adequate preparation of domestic opinion.

### Managing the Soviet Empire

The Soviet Union will continue to exploit opportunities to expand its influence in the Third World as they arise in the future. However, as a result of its past successes, the new issues for future Soviet policy are likely to revolve increasingly around the question of managing its burden of empire in established positions. This has a political, military, and economic dimension.

In the political sphere, the Soviets will have to seek ways to improve the staying power and reliability of their clients. My view is that this has been the chief issue for Soviet Third World policy for the better part of the past decade -- particularly after the fall of Allende in Chile and the defection of Egypt -- and that many elements of a solution are already in place.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the earlier generation of bourgeois nationalist clients, Moscow's principal problem was a lack of effective instruments of leverage to bring them into line. The Soviets had to rely primarily on the promise of arms transfers, or in some cases the threat to withhold arms, to produce compliance with their wishes. This proved to be a weak instrument at best: the Soviets found

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<sup>22</sup> See Alex Alexiev, *The New Soviet Strategy in the Third World* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, N-1995-AF, June 1983), and my own paper *The Military Dimension of Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, P-6965, Feb. 1984).

themselves being drawn into unwanted confrontations with the US (as in the case of the Arab-Israeli wars), or else supplanted by alternative suppliers (as in the case of Iraq and the French).

Since approximately the mid-70s, the Soviets sought to create more direct forms of leverage by much greater active involvement in the internal workings of the client state. These have included large-scale deployments of Soviet, Cuban, and Eastern European combat forces and advisors to help in the management of external security, use of East Germans to restructure and supervise internal security apparatus, and development of centralized, Leninist state structures to control as much of the political and economic life of the country as possible.

Encouragement of Marxist-Leninist national liberation movements and their transformation into elite vanguard parties has been an important element in this strategy as well, since such regimes would as a general rule be less reluctant to cooperate closely with the Soviet bloc and provide an institutional basis for a long-term relationship with Moscow. In this respect the weakness and lack of internal legitimacy of many of these new regimes which we earlier took note of as a liability is an advantage for the Soviets, since it ensures that the client will remain highly dependent on Soviet support for its survival. The effectiveness of this strategy may be seen in South Yemen, where East German and Cuban intelligence operatives and combat troops were able to participate in the removal of President Selim Rubai Ali in June 1978 when he appeared too zealous in his quest for detente with the conservative Arab Gulf states, or in Ethiopia where the military regime finally institutionalized its rule with the creation of the vanguard Worker's Party of Ethiopia on the tenth anniversary of its rule in September 1984. While the Soviets and Cubans continue to work closely with a number of non-Communist allies as well, we can expect in future further instances of active interference in the internal affairs of all clients.

In the military sphere, the Soviets and Cubans will face a number of unpleasant and unfamiliar choices. For several years now they have had to fight or assist in large-scale counterinsurgency wars in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, and Kampuchea. This type of warfare is not totally unfamiliar to the Soviet military, since it has fought prolonged counterinsurgency campaigns previously within its own borders,

against the Basmachi tribesmen in Central Asia in the 20s and 30s and against the Lithuanians after the liberation of the Baltic states in the late 40s and early 50s. These earlier campaigns were costly but could be kept under control because the guerillas were operating on Soviet territory and did not attract significant outside political or military support. The damage caused to the Soviet international image by having to fight popular resistance movements in Angola and Afghanistan is significantly greater. No professional army, moreover, enjoys fighting a counterinsurgency war or does particularly well at it. Its effects on internal Red Army morale, while less extensive than for the United States in Vietnam, will be damaging, and in the case of Cuba could have serious effects on the popularity of the regime itself.

Beyond the question of continuing peacetime force deployments, the Soviets and Cubans may be forced to take more drastic decisions to intervene on behalf of certain clients to keep them in power. Such a decision was in effect already taken in the case of Afghanistan in December 1979. Even so, the intervention force is barely sufficient to control Afghanistan's cities and lines of communications. Further operations to seal the border with Pakistan or to pacify and hold substantial parts of the countryside will require a much larger commitment of forces, possibly upwards of half a million men. Since the Soviets have evidently decided not to commit forces of this size, they have in effect opted for a stalemate. While they seem perfectly capable of hanging on at the present level of costs and casualties for the indefinite future, higher levels of Western support for the mujahedeen could force them to take a more dramatic decision. Cuban troop strength in Angola has risen steadily from a low of approximately 15,000 to well over 20,000 currently in response to UNITA's successes, and may have to increase further still. While Cuban forces have up till now performed mostly garrison duties (thereby freeing up MPLA manpower to fight UNITA), a serious threat to the capital of Luanda itself is likely to require a direct Cuban combat role. Nicaragua would become a sink for arms and advisors were it not for its geographical proximity to the United States, which would make any Soviet attempt to intervene on its behalf costly and pointless. Cuba itself has substantially increased the size of its armed forces over the past decade, and at full



mobilization boasts an army of nearly one million men for an island with a total population of ten million.<sup>23</sup> While the situation of other Soviet clients is not quite as perilous, their security situations could unexpectedly deteriorate in the next decade to the point of requiring massive Soviet military assistance to stay in power.

Finally, there are the economic costs of empire. In the past decade, the Soviets have undertaken a number of expensive new ongoing commitments in addition to their six million dollar a day subsidy of Cuba. These include Vietnam and the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, Angola, Ethiopia, and the incremental costs of maintaining over 100,000 troops in Afghanistan. At a time when the growth rate of the Soviet economy has begun to slow considerably, Soviet economic planners must question the rationale behind some of Moscow's Third World commitments. To take one example, the USSR provided North Yemen with three quarters of a billion dollars worth of arms following the brief border war with the PDRY in 1979 in an attempt to balance Saudi influence in Sanaa. As noted earlier, there is evidence that some voices in the Soviet leadership have been urging retrenchment and greater selectivity in Moscow's Third World commitments.

## V. MANAGING US-SOVIET INTERACTIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD

A world in which both the US and the Soviet Union are supporting challenges to the status quo is obviously going to be a dangerous one in many respects, and suggests that the superpowers will remain heavily involved in the conflicts that will inevitably arise in the Third World. It will also tend to be more dangerous because the terrain will look less familiar. For US policymakers, the typical question regarding Third World crises concerned whether and how to intervene to stop subversion by various left-wing forces. The opposite question of how far to go before provoking Soviet intervention came up as major issues in Korea and Vietnam, and yet tended to be asked less frequently in the majority of postwar Third World crises. This is a question that US decision makers will have to ponder closely as Soviet clients are increasingly challenged by forces seeking support from the West.

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<sup>23</sup> *Cuban Armed Forces and the Soviet Military Presence* (US Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Special Report No. 103, August 1982).

While the United States severely misjudged Chinese willingness to intervene in Korea, the Soviets have been relatively cautious about the use of force in the postwar era. US concerns over provoking a major Soviet intervention in Vietnam proved in retrospect to be overdrawn. Nonetheless, the broad growth of Soviet military power over the last twenty years, and particularly the growth of Soviet power projection forces<sup>24</sup> may affect Soviet willingness to intervene in local conflicts. Much depends on specific questions of stake and capability, which in turn is related to geography. The Soviets did not respond to the American invasion of Grenada because they did not have the means to do so, and because Grenada was a very minor client. Cuba is much more important, but is not likely to receive direct Soviet military support either in the event it is attacked any time in the foreseeable future. The same is not necessarily true in sub-Saharan Africa, however, where both superpowers operate at similar geographical disadvantages, much less the Persian Gulf/Middle East, which is close to the center of Soviet power.

Pakistan presents perhaps the clearest case of how Soviet power might be brought to bear. Were the United States to increase its level of support for the Afghan mujahedeen to the point where Soviets casualties and other costs rose substantially, the Soviet Union could respond by conducting airstrikes or even ground incursions against Afghan resistance camps inside Pakistan in the hopes of forcing Pakistan to deny the groups further sanctuary. The principal rationale behind the Reagan Administration's \$3 billion program of military and economic assistance to Pakistan was to bolster Islamabad's ability to stand up to

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<sup>24</sup> Actually, the question is much broader than the issue of power projection forces, which tend to get overemphasized in discussions of Soviet Third World policy. The Soviets have many ways of causing trouble for the United States in a variety of theaters, some of them far removed from the particular local conflict in question. The Soviets could, for example, send nuclear submarines to Cuba, mobilize along the Iranian border, encourage Vietnamese incursions into Thailand, fly retaliatory airstrikes into Pakistan, or even reopen the Berlin question in response, say, to US activities in Africa. This type of behavior has been referred to as lateral escalation in the United States; consideration of Soviet options for lateral escalation suggest why such a policy may not be terribly advantageous for the US.

the Soviets under precisely this type of scenario, but should this prove insufficient, the United States would be faced with the question of whether to increase its material support or assist directly in the defense of Pakistani air space with, for example, US Air Force units. Despite the reestablishment of US-Pakistani links in 1981 there is virtually no national consensus in the United States over the defense of Pakistan, and plenty of opposition to further involvement with Islamabad for human rights and non-proliferation reasons. The most likely outcome is that the US will refuse to intervene and cut back its support for the mujahedeen in the hopes of inducing the Soviets to back down. The same situation exists in Southeast Asia, where US support (or increased Chinese assistance) for the Khmer People's National Liberation Front and other Kampuchean resistance groups may provoke a large-scale Vietnamese attack on Thailand. While the US theoretically has the capability to defend Thailand, just as in the case of Afghanistan domestic political constraints will undercut its ability to do so.

By and large, the risks that the superpowers run in the Third World are those of getting drawn into long and costly interventions. The stakes involved in most Third World crises are too small to present the prospect of major direct US-Soviet conflict and escalation to general war, and with a minimal amount of prudence, things should stay this way. The one part of the Third World where this is not true is the Middle East/Persian Gulf, where the combination of high mutual stakes, continual local political instability, and the presence of strong military forces could plausibly lead to war between the Soviet Union and the United States. The regulation of US-Soviet interactions in the Gulf presents a different order of problem from the ones considered here, and deserves further elaboration in a different context.

If the trends described here do in fact come to characterize the Third World environment of the late 1980s and early 1990s -- and to some extent they already do -- there is reason to think that we may be entering a period with greater opportunities for cooperative measures and bargaining between the US and Soviet Union over the management of their interactions in the Third World. US ability to challenge the existing Soviet-sponsored order should, if handled correctly, result in greater overall leverage for the United States. Rather than being an

overextended quasi-imperial power perpetually responding to challenges all over the world, the US might be able to take the initiative at times and places of its own choosing. The world would then be a rather mixed place, with the US holding advantages in some theaters and the Soviets in others, or in different countries in the same theater. The US and the Soviets, or the US and the Soviet client, could then have a basis for serious negotiations on ending mutual intervention or a total neutralization of the area in question. This appears to be the situation that is emerging in Central America now, where both El Salvador and Nicaragua are subject to guerilla insurgencies sponsored by the other camp. It is the mutuality of the problem that gives hope to both the Contadora process and the direct negotiations that began between the US and Nicaragua in 1984.

Looking even further ahead, it may be possible to negotiate more explicit understandings with the Soviet Union over spheres of influence or, perhaps, spheres of restraint, in which the superpowers would agree to suspend aid to groups opposing each other's clients. In theory, these tradeoffs need not occur within the same region, but could be implemented in different parts of the world where both the US and the Soviet Union have interests.<sup>25</sup> Before getting carried away with such proposals, however, it is necessary to point out two practical obstacles.

In the first place, however much the US and Soviet Union may seek to become involved in Third World affairs, their influence over their respective clients remains limited. We are not after all living in a 19th century world where local peoples are the passive pawns of the great powers. Superpower clients will strongly resist any attempts to reach deals behind their backs, and usually will have the leverage to block them. One good example of this was Egypt's Sadat, who feared that Washington and Moscow were conspiring to freeze the territorial status quo in the Middle East at their May 1972 summit. His response was to expel the Soviet advisors in Egypt that summer and force the Soviet Union into supporting his launching of the October War. Similarly,

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<sup>25</sup> Not all such deals are in the interests of the United States. One means of resolving the Sino-Soviet conflict suggested by several observers is Soviet restraint in its support of Vietnam in return for Chinese assistance in resolving the Afghan situation.

Jonas Savimbi is not a force that can be turned on or off by outside powers at will, since his power is ultimately derived from his popular base inside Angola. UNITA's success has already undermined the Reagan Administration's Namibia policy, which has sought to trade South African withdrawal from Namibia for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola, since those Cuban troops are the MPLA's only remaining protection against Savimbi. Similarly, the Rhodesians and South Africans having created Renamo are not necessarily in a position to curtail it; even without South African support the organization will continue to disrupt the Mozambican economy. While the US and the Soviet Union may try to hatch deals over support for Third World clients, their ability to fine-tune outcomes and ultimately deliver the goods is more apparent than real.

A second problem is a domestic American one. The idea of great power horsetrading over spheres of influence has always been an alien one smacking of European cabinet diplomacy to many in the United States. While Europe has in effect been divided into spheres of influence since the end of the war, no US administration has been able to admit this publicly. A certain universalistic strain in US foreign policy makes it very hard for Americans to totally renounce interest in causes (for example, Polish independence) taken up as a matter of principle, however quixotic they may appear. While US-Soviet understandings on spheres of interest may be possible on a very informal basis, such negotiations would probably have to be kept out of the public eye. Whether this is possible in an age of Congressional oversight and an active press remains to be seen.

Thus we are brought back to the question of unilateral US policies. The United States will not be able to bargain away its problems simply by trying to exploit Soviet client vulnerabilities, but will continue to have to deal with the problem of Soviet expansionism and revolutionary challenges to its own friends and allies through the usual political and military means. Even if the US is able to force Managua to end support for the left in El Salvador, one will have solved only a small part of the latter country's problem. Besides the nations of the Caribbean basin, a number of other countries -- most notably the Philippines -- may be subject to revolutionary upheaval over the next few years. Despite the fact that the US has had considerable experience with this

type of situation, it has yet to come up with a satisfactory formula for reforming recalcitrant right wing allies and encouraging the development of liberal democratic societies in the Third World that might serve as a more permanent basis for American influence.

It is true that belief in the possibility of moderate alternatives to right-wing authoritarianism for many parts of the Third World has proven to be a naive illusion which has befuddled the thinking of past American administrations and caused them to acquiesce in the replacement of pro-Western dictatorships of the right with pro-Soviet dictatorships of the left.<sup>26</sup> There are clearly countries whose histories and cultures give one no basis whatsoever for expecting the emergence of anything like a moderate democratic center. Criticism of human rights abuses or attempts to democratize regimes in this type of country only serve to undermine the client and bring about something much worse, both with respect to US interests and in moral terms. Such I would argue was the case in Iran, where belief that the National Front types around Khomeini would prevail blinded many American officials to the revolutionary dynamic at work there. In this type of situation, moreover, attempts to coopt the revolution seldom work. In both Ethiopia and Nicaragua the United States attempted to maintain good relations with the revolutionary regimes after they came to power, increasing military and economic aid over previous levels in both cases. Both regimes were uninterested in good relations with the US, however, for reasons of principle which were little affected by US behavior in the short run, and turned quickly to the Soviet Union and Cuba not because they had nowhere else to go, but out of inclination.

On the other hand, it is incorrect and potentially dangerous to suggest that the Third World as a whole is an area of darkness incapable of building liberal institutions or democratizing its political processes through moderate means. In the past decade we have already seen several examples of states in the lower tier of the developed world or the upper tier of the underdeveloped world (i.e., Spain, Greece, Portugal, Argentina, Turkey, and most recently Brazil) move from right-wing military dictatorships to more or less functioning democracies.

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<sup>26</sup> This of course was the argument of Jeanne Kirkpatrick in her article "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary*, November 1979.

All of these countries are large and economically well-developed, with relatively advanced social systems and strong (if in some cases not particularly stable) institutional structures. It will not be possible to apply their experience to small and backward American client regimes like El Salvador, whose level of social development comes out of another century. But for others it will, and as with Soviet clients, one must evaluate these countries case by case. For example, the Philippines (unlike Iran) has had considerable experience with democratic institutions as a result of its long American tutelage; while timing is critical, it may still be possible for the United States to facilitate creation of a successor to the Marcos regime that is moderate and reasonably well-disposed to the United States.<sup>27</sup> For countries like the Philippines, or others like Argentina which have made the difficult transition back to democracy, the United States needs to formulate a much more creative strategy for supporting and coopting social change long before it is radicalized and the revolutionary process begun. In other cases (Saudi Arabia is probably an example), the US can only cross its fingers and hope for the best.

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<sup>27</sup> Chile prior the rise of Allende and the Pinochet coup, was another country with a long history of successful democratic institutions.

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